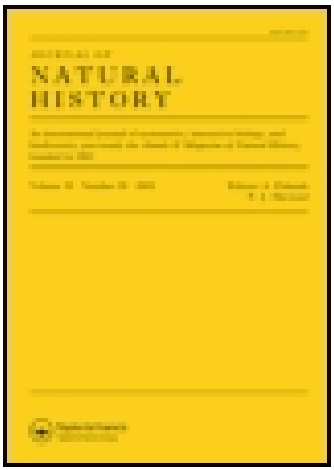
On: 07 February 2015, At: 22:19
Publisher: Taylor & Francis
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Annals and Magazine of Natural History: Series 4

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tnah10

On a newt from the Darjiling hills

Prof. J. Wood-Mason

Published online: 13 Oct 2009.

To cite this article: Prof. J. Wood-Mason (1877) On a newt from the Darjiling hills, Annals and Magazine of Natural History: Series 4, 19:114, 509-510, DOI: 10.1080/00222937708682184

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00222937708682184

a private letter, which some indiscreet friend of Mr. Alexander Agassiz published in 'Silliman's Journal,' and which then found its way into the English journals, is 'official.' He would have done well to have ascertained whether this was really the case before allowing himself to comment on Sir Wyville Thomson's proceedings in such severe terms. So far as we are aware, out of the many naturalists actually engaged to work out the results of the 'Challenger' expedition, only *three* are not Englishmen, two being Americans, and one German. These three gentlemen are of the very highest repute in their respective branches; and Sir Wyville Thomson has, in our opinion, done well for science to secure their services."

The Editor of 'Nature' seems to have a curious notion of the application of words. In what manner, except by an expression of his own opinion, does he attempt to show that the letter from Prof. Duncan, which appeared in our last number, contained an "unwarranted" attack? In what sense he uses the word "official" we are at a loss to understand. It is not usual in such cases to talk of "official" statements and communications. The only question seems to be whether the statements published in the 'American Journal' for February last were or were not "true;" and we were informed by Prof. Duncan that he had fully satisfied himself upon this point, by direct communication with Sir Wyville Thomson, before he wrote his letter. From the wording of the letter from Mr. Alexander Agassiz, as printed in the 'American Journal,' it is perfectly clear that the letter in question was addressed by Mr. Agassiz to the Editors of that Journal, or to one of them; and hence that gentleman himself must be held guilty of the indiscretion pointed out by the Editor of 'Nature.' But in what does the indiscreetness consist? Mr. Agassiz's statement was undoubtedly indiscreet if there was any thing in the transaction that required concealment. Are we to infer that such was the case? Indiscretions appear not to be peculiarly the produce of the western shore of the Atlantic.

On a Newt from the Darjiling Hills. By Prof. J. Wood-Mason.

At the February Meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Prof. Wood-Mason exhibited a specimen of a newt which he had detected in a small collection of insects and other objects recently made by Colonel G. B. Mainwaring in the Darjiling hills and said:—"The specimen is in the highest degree interesting, not only as being the first example of a tailed amphibian that has ever been found in India, but also as being an individual of the remarkable species described by Dr. J. Anderson (P. Z. S. 1871, p. 423) from specimens obtained by him around the little Chinese town of Nantin and in various other parts of the same region. *Tylototriton verrucosus*, as the animal has been called by Dr. Anderson, lives, in Western China, in flooded rice-fields, but in Sikkim, according to Colonel Main-

waring, in damp situations amongst decaying leaves and sticks. There is, however, nothing remarkable in this difference of habit; for the common eft of Europe is not unfrequently to be found on dry land at some distance from water under logs of wood, there being no necessity for the Urodelous Amphibia, after they have passed through that stage of their existence during which they are provided with external gills for aquatic respiration, to keep to the water. The entire order of tailed Amphibia is confined to the temperate parts of the northern hemisphere; but two species have already been described from countries the fauna of which is largely leavened by Indo-Malayan forms,—*Cynops chinensis* having been recorded from near Ningpo, and *Plethodon persimilis* from Siam. This occurrence of a newt within the limits of the Oriental region is far from being without a parallel in other groups of animals also—*Nectogale* (*vide* W. T. Blanford, P. A. S. B. 1876), *Anurosorex*, probably also *Crossopus*, and a host of animals, vertebrate and invertebrate, extending still further southwards, being only to be looked upon as stragglers from the Palæarctic region or as outposts of it, to use the happy phrase of Dr. Günther. The only other form of newt at all resembling *T. verrucosus*, in which horny matter, accumulated at the points where the ends of the ribs press against the external integument, forms on each side of the middle line of the body along the upperside of the flanks a conspicuous row of great rough horny tubercles, is *Pleurodeles*, in which these bosses are sometimes so highly developed as to have given rise to the incorrect notion that the ends of the ribs projected freely through the skin.—*Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, February 1877.

On the Value of certain Arguments of Transformism derived from the Evolution of the Dentary Follicles in the Ruminants. By M. V. Pietkiewicz.

In a communication made to the British Association in 1839, Goodsir announced that he had discovered in the jaw of the calf and lamb the germs of incisors and canines, and even of a molar, intermediate between the abortive canine and the molars which normally exist in those animals. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire had previously described abortive dentary germs in the lower jaw of *Balæna mysticetus*. The naturalists, and the partisans of the theory of transformism, Darwin especially, grasped at this idea, which, in conjunction with data furnished by comparative anatomy and palæontology, enabled groups of animals previously separated to be brought into relation.

Thus the dental formula of the ordinary Ruminants is I. $\frac{0}{3}$, C. $\frac{0}{1}$, M. $\frac{6}{6}$, and that of the omnivorous Pachyderms (such as the wild boar and the hippopotamus) I. $\frac{3}{3}$, C. $\frac{1}{1}$, M. $\frac{7}{7}$. But two or three genera of Ruminants possess upper canines; and their formula is I. $\frac{0}{3}$, C. $\frac{1}{1}$, M. $\frac{6}{6}$; and the camels and llamas have, in addition, a pair